THE CERTAINTY Of A FUTURE STATE: OR, AN OCCASIONAL LETTER CONCERNING APPARITIONS.

By. *J. Roe*, A. M. And Chaplain to the Right Honourable *Charles* Earl of *Burlington*.

If they hear not Moſes *and the Prophets, neither will they be perſuaded tho' one roſe from the Dead,* Luke 16. 31.

The Second Edition.

LONDON,

Printed for *Joſeph Wild*, at the Sign of the *Elephant*, at *Charing-Croſs*, M DC XCVIII.

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1698

To the Right Honourable

Charles Boyle, Baron *Clifford* of *Lansbrow*, and Earl of *Burlington*, Baron of *Youghall*, and *Bandon*, Viscount *Kynalmeaky* and *Dongarvan*, and Earl of *Cork*, in the Kingdom of *Ireland*; Chief Governour of the County of *Cork*, and of the City and County of the City of *Cork*, Lord High Treasurer of *Ireland*; Lord High Steward of the *Royalty* of *Knaesbrough* in the County of *York*, and one of the Gentlemen of His Majesty's Bed-Chamber.

My Lord,

IT is not with any Design to Inform Your Lordships *Judgment, by any thing that can be met with in so mean a Discourse, that I am induced*

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duced to lay it at Your Lordships *Feet: But being Composed under* Your Lordships *Roof, it Claims a Natural kind of Right, of coming under* Your Lordships *Protection.*

Things of little worth receive a Value when they are made the Offerings of Respect and Gratitude; and this I am oblig'd to Acknowledge upon the account of those Remarkable Instances of Generosity which I have received, (*not only from* Your Lordship) *but from Your truly Honourable and good Lady, both before, and since I had the Honour of being Entertain'd as* Your Lordships *Chaplain; which I needs must own with all that deference which is justly owing to* Your Lordships *Eminent Quality, and Personal Accomplishments.*

It

The Epistle Dedicatory.

It is Your Lordships *Happiness to receive the Extraordinary Blessings of Providence, without any Alteration of Temper, which can only be Attributed to a peculiar Greatness of Spirit, which the World is fully convinc'd of, and of which* Your Lordships *Family in all degrees are particularly sensible.*

It will be a difficult thing for Posterity, rightly to distinguish between those who have deserv'd Well, or Ill; since some have been so averse to Truth, that they have supply'd what has been really wanting in due Merit, by their many Flattering and Excessive Commendations.

But I need not take such Measures with Your Lordship, *whose Accomplishments*

plishments are so Signal, that they render Your Lordship, *(in the Opinion of all that know you) one of the greatest Ornaments of the Age we live in.*

That Your Lordship *may be truly thankful to* Almighty God, *for so Great Endowments, that* Your Lordshiy *may live* Many *and* Many Years *to make a Right and Good Use of them in this World, and be Rewarded for Well-doing in the Next; is and always shall be the hearty Prayers of,*

My Lord,

Your Lordships

Most Obedient

Servant and Chaplain,

I. Roe.

THE

THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

THE following Letter was not Writ out of a desire to appear in *Print*, nor from a Principle of too nicely Enquiring into the Judgments and Opinions of other Men, but to gratifie the Requests of some, whom I could not modestly refuse: If it may any ways Contribute to Promote the Dignity and

A Sufficiency

Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, or prove the Certainty of a *Future State*, againſt the *Scepticks* of the Age, without the Teſtimony of *Apparitions*, I have my chief Aim.

Farwell.

THE

THE

CERTAINTY

Of A

FUTURE STATE:

OR,

An Occasional LETTER Concerning APPARITIONS.

SIR,

I Have often thought (since our last meeting) of the strange account you gave me of the *Apparition* of *G. S.* to *W. D.* and likewise of the dreadful Consequences that have attended some Persons, who have

 entertained

entertain'd too credulous a Belief of them; insomuch that to this very Day too many are grown to that height of Impiety, that they will not be perswaded of any *Future State*, unless some one rise from the Dead to make proof of it. As you were pleased to be very free with me, I shall take the same Liberty; and must beg pardon, if I cannot condescend so far as to be of your Opinion.

In the first place then I shall give you my own Notion of an *Apparition*.

2*dly*. The Reasons why I cannot believe any thing of them.

The Word *Apparition* is usually taken to signifie no more then the Species or Resemblance of a Deceased Person; and that there are no such *Apparitions* (whatever some may pretend) I am very apt to believe upon these three accounts.

First, Because it is a Supposition so far from being countenanced, that it seems directly

rectly contrary to the ſenſe of the Scriptures.

2*dly.* Becauſe it is a Suppoſition altogether uſeleſs and unneceſſary.

3*dly.* Becauſe it ſeems to be inconſiſtent with common Reaſon.

I would not be thought to queſtion, much leſs to deny that that there are *Spirits*, neither will I preſume to limit the Wiſdom and Power of Almighty God: But as for the *Apparitions* of Deceaſed Perſons ſo frequently Diſcourſed of in the World, I believe there is nothing in them. The Holy Scriptures in my opinion are ſo far from giving us the leaſt encouragement to expect an *Apparition* upon any account whatever; that God himſelf has ſtrictly forbid us to apply our ſelves unto, or have any manner of intercourſe with the Dead, *Iſaiah* 8. 19. And altogether *as ſtrict is* the prohibition given by *Moſes*, Deut. 18. 11. *there ſhall not be found among you any one that is a Charmer, Conſulter with Familiar Spirits, or a*

Necromancer, for every one that doth these things is an abomination to the Lord.

But besides these and such like Prohibitions, the Holy Scriptures plainly do assure us, that the Body of Man after Death returns to the Dust, and the *Spirit i.e.* the Soul unto God that gave it, *i.e.* to be disposed and determined by him to a *fixt Station*, either of Happiness or Misery. This is evident from the Account we have of *Dives* and *Lazarus*; there being so vast a Gulf between them, *i.e.* an irreversible Decree (by the wise Order and Appointment of God) passed upon them; insomuch that as one observes it is impossible for all the Saints in Heaven to obtain any manner of Release for them, and altogether as impossible for themselves to be one Minute out of that State.

Dr. Hammond, *in his Annotations on* Luke 16.

Now since it appears Demonstrable that the *Souls* of the Righteous are *confined* to a State of Happiness after Death (where they are to *continue* and *remain* till the Day

Day of the Reſurrection) and this by the ſpecial deſignation and appointment of God; then it muſt neceſſarily be ſuppoſed, that the *Souls* of the Wicked are *cloſely confined* by the ſame appointment to a *State of Miſery and Horror*, where they muſt neceſſarily and unavoidably *continue* till they receive the final Sentence. And if both the *Souls* of the Righteous and the *Souls* of the Wicked are reſpectively Determined to their *ſeveral States*, and have their *bouuds* fixt by the poſitive Order and Appointment of Almighty God; if the Body turns to Duſt (as we daily ſee it does) and if the *Soul* is confined to a *certain Station* either of Happineſs or Miſery from whence it cannot make any eſcape, (all which is clearly intimated in Scripture) then how is it likely there ſhould be any ſuch thing as the *Apparition* or real Repreſentation of a Deceaſed Perſon.

It is Gods Prerogative to be the Creator of Mankind, and 'tis God only that can give him Life and Being, and if ſo, can we think it to be in the power of Duſt, Corruption,

Corruption, or any other created Being whatever, either to *Unite* or *Animate* that ſame Body and Soul, which Death has deprived both of Life and Being upon Earth.

Dr. Henry Moor. *Mr.* Glanvil's *Sadduciſmus Triumphatus.* *See Dr.* Moor's *Letter to Mr.* Glanvil.

There have been ſome its true who have maintained the contrary, who poſitively affirm that departed Souls have a care and regard to their fellow Souls upon Earth, becauſe a Soul appeared to St. *Stephen*, when ſtoned, and to St. *Paul* before his Converſion. I ſhall not trouble you to ſhew what a forced Inference this is; the Scriptures only mention Angels doing ſo, which I am far from queſtioning; but yet I think there is ſome difference between an Angel and the Soul of Man, otherwiſe the Holy *David* needed not to have told us *that Man was made lower then the Angels*, and *Tertullian* likewiſe, *de anima*, *to have* defined the Angels, (*evocatores animarum*, i. e. the Meſſengers of God, which command the Souls out of their Bodies: And whoſe buſineſs *as that Father*

Father intimates, it is to Conduct and ſhew them whereunto they are deſigned after Death.

If any reply that an *Apparition* may be, tho' not of the *Body* or *Soul* of any Deceaſed Perſon, I ſhall Anſwer this in its proper place, where I am to ſhew the inconſiſtency of ſuch a Suppoſition with common Reaſon.

At preſent I muſt confeſs, Almighty God can do whatſoever pleaſes him both in Heaven and in Earth, in the Sea, and in all Deep Places, inſomuch that every particle of our Bodies, every Duſt and Atome that belongs to us is known to him, for *he who numbers the very Sands of the Sea, and the very Hairs of our Heads*, muſt needs keep an account of all the ſcatter'd Bones, ſee into all the Graves and Tombs, ſearch all the Repoſitories of the Earth, and know what Duſt belongs to each Body, what Body to each Soul, and by what ways and means, as at the firſt Creation, thoſe ſcatter'd Particles ſhould be again united, and the

the ruined Fabrick of Man's Body once more Compoſed.

But to Unite a dead Carkaſs to a living Soul, or to permit and ſuffer a *true and real Reſemblance thereof* to be acted by any other, and all this only to make a ſlight ſhew and appearance for ſome little time, either only to be the Meſſengers of God's Will, or a Terror to the Living, ſeems altogether inconſiſtent with thoſe Methods of Divine Revelation, which God has been already pleaſed to favour us with.

The Queſtion whether *the Souls of Men departed* do appear to thoſe who remain alive, is decided by moſt, both Antient and Modern Writers negatively; and they who are for the Affirmitive Part, can reſolve it no other way but this, that when ſuch *Apparitions* are, *'tis only by ſpecial Diſpenſation*; thus at our bleſſed Saviours Transfiguration, there appeared *Moſes* and *Elias*, and likewiſe at his Crucifixtion *the Graves were opened, and many Bodies of Saints which ſlept aroſe.*

But

But now the caſe is otherwiſe, for ſince Miracles are ceaſed, and the Chriſtian Diſpenſation is very ſufficiently confirmed to us; there is not one Inſtance in the whole Bible to encourage us to expect an *Apparition* in theſe times; but on the contrary, there is nothing more uſual with God then to fruſtrate and diſappoint the Expectations all ſuch as will not acquieſce in the ordinary Diſpenſation of his Will.

To ſuppoſe therefore that this Courſe of Conſulting with the *Dead* were not Prohibited (tho' you have ſeen it is) and to ſuppoſe yet farther that it is a very likely and probable way of ſucceeding in what may be deſign'd thereby; yet this muſt be granted of neceſſity, that 'tis not the ordinary Courſe which God has appointed, and therefore cannot be depended on as likely to become ſucceſsful unto any.

The Phariſees we know deſired a Sign from our Bleſſed Saviour to Confirm his Miſſion and Doctrine to them, they were not contented with thoſe won-

derful Miracles that he wrought amongst them: and which were then (as I may say) his ordinary means to Attest his Divinity, and Convince the World of their Unbelief; nothing would do with them but a *Sign* from Heaven; and no other Sign then such as was given at the first promulgation of the Law: But the vanity of all this our Saviour plainly discovers, and severely rebukes in these words, *there shall no Sign be given.*

Thus when Men presume to Capitulate as it were with Almighty God, as to the enforcing the Duties of Faith and Obedience upon them (as the chief Priests and Elders did with our Blessed Saviour at his Crucifixion, namely that if he would come down from the Cross then they would believe him.) I say, when Men begin to question the Power of God, and the Authority of his Word, and resolve neither to believe in him, nor obey him, unless he will condescend to let them have such *Signs* as may answer and gratifie their foolish expectations and unreasonable Curiosities;

when

when they will not believe there *is a Future State* of Puniſhment prepared for the Wicked without an *Apparition* to confirm the truth of it; 'tis not only uſual, but juſt with God to fruſtrate and baffle them in ſuch unreaſonable Propoſals.

2dly, But ſuppoſing God ſhould permit and ſuffer *Apparitions* to wander up and down and haunt his Servants upon Earth; yet what end and purpoſe can we imagine there ſhould be in it? Can it any ways tend to promote the Honour and Glory of Almighty God? The Pſalmiſt expreſly tells us, *that the Dead praiſe him not, neither they that go down into ſilence?* Or can it anſwer any other of the Deſigns of his wiſe Providence in governing the Word? Or in the leaſt Contribute to the Reformation of Mankind?

Some perhaps may object and ſay, why may it not conſiſt with Gods Wiſdom to ſend *an Apparition* to make a Diſcovery of ſome ſtrange *Murder* which may have been concealed for ſome time.

But in this it may be answered, that Almighty God has many extraordinary ways to make such Discoveries without an *Apparition*, whereof we have many Instances, as well from History, as our own Experience; for if the Heavens above, the Earth beneath, and every thing moving therein are the Work of Gods Hands, and subservient to his wise Providence in governing the World; what need of an *Apparition* to make such Discoveries, Since they may be done well enough without it, and by such ways and means as very well consist with his other Methods of Administrations here on Earth.

And if an *Apparition* cannot answer any of the Designs of Gods wise Providence in governing the World, it may be very easily prov'd that they cannot in the least Contribute to the Reformation of Mankind.

For to suppose that an *Apparition or the Ghost of a Deceased Person* could have the liberty of coming into the World, and might

might be able to give us Topographical Description of the *Future State* of *Punishment*; yet this Description could not any ways exceed the Discoveries we have already made to us in the Holy Scriptures. There we are informed of a *devouring Fire and Everlasting Burnings, of a Gnawing Worm that never ceases, and of being Tormented in a Burning Lake with Fire and Brimstone Day and Night for ever.*

Now if this be so, what imaginary necessity can there be for an *Apparition*, or any ones rising from the *Dead* to confirm these things: Certainly nothing does, or can exagerate the wooful condition of Damned Creatures with greater Circumstances of Horror then the Scriptures do; and considering the Authority they are delivered by, they are sufficient to convince the most confident and daring Sinner, so as to cast him into *Belshaazar's Tremblings and Convulsions*; and if there may be any who can hear *these Terrors of the Lord* with Indifference or Unconcernedness, or conceive them worse in their Description, then they really

really are; such Persons are Scripture proof, they are above *Moses* and the *Prophets*, our *Blessed Saviour* and *his Apostles*; neither would they be persuaded *tho' one rose from the Dead*; for I dare be positive in this, *that no Ghost or Apparition* will ever have any effect upon that Man, whom the greatest Promises, the strongest Arguments, the most affectionate Persuasions, and the most dreadful Threatnings cannot prevail with to Repent; and if I am unwilling to affirm that 'tis impossible there should be such a thing as an *Apparition*, yet I am sure they are unnessary: And those Persons who are so Credulous as to believe them, must resolve to Act wiithout a just Warrant from Scripture.

I am not in the least insensible of the frequent Mentions which are to be found of *Apparitions in Holy Scripture*: But these were the Miraculous Works of God, made manifest for the Confirmation of his Will, and the Christian Dispensation, and since this has been sufficiently Revealed and Confirmed to Mankind, *Miracles are Ceased.*

Some

Some its true diſtinguiſh between things ſtrange and unaccountable, and Miracles; and tho' they allow that *Apparitions* are ſtrange and unaccountable, yet they will not allow them to be Miracles, *for a true Miracle (according to Mr.* Glanvil's *Notion) muſt be above the Power of Nature, to Seal and Confirm ſome* Divine Doctrine *in which the good and happineſs of Mankind is contain'd.*

Glanvil's *Saduciſmus*, page 124.

But certainly, if the matter of Fact (related by Mr. *Glanvil*, as to Major *Sydenham* and Captain *Dyke*) be true, then an *Apparition* may confirm us in ſeveral Fundamental Doctrines, *as the Being of a God, the Certainty of a Future State, and the Rewards and Puniſhments of another Life.*

And according to the ſame Notion of a *Miracle*, to ſuppoſe an *Apparition* to do thus, is *to ſuppoſe a Miracle*; *and if Miracles are Ceaſed*, it conſequently follows that *Apparitions* muſt be ſo too, and then the Inference is plain, there can be no farther neceſſity for them, in order to the Reformation of Mankind. Now

Now the truth of this is Evident from plain Matter of Fact; and they who have uſed that piece of *Necromancy* in Conſulting with the *Dead*, touching Matters of concernment to themſelves or others; have met with this particular Judgment from God, for their Indirect and Unwarrantable Practiſes; that they have *grown more Obſtinate* and *Hardned* in their Impieties, till at length they have been drove to the utmoſt *Horror* and *Deſpair*: There are ſeveral Inſtances in *Scripture* to this purpoſe.

I begin with *Saul*, who applys himſelf to the *Witch of Endor*, and muſt needs have *Samuel* raiſed from the *Dead* to Inform him of ſome things wherein he was not ſatisfied; and here I ſhall not enter into a Diſpute, whether the true *Samuel* appeared (tho' I believe it was not, and moſt Expoſitors are of the ſame Opinion,) it being never known that any of the *Prophets* were ſubject to ſuch Diabolical Conjurations.

However, we find that *Saul* believes the *Spirit* appearing in the Form of *Samuel*,

to

to be Samuel indeed, and therefore *Saul* behaves himſelf with all poſſible reſpectfulneſs, bows down before him and ſo propounds his doubts.

But alaſs! He was ſo far from being informed of any thing that was material; ſo far from being reduced to Obedience by what he either ſaw or heard from the *Spirit*, *Ghoſt*, or *Apparition*; that he became more confirmed in his Obſtinacy and Rebellion againſt God: Inſomuch that ſome are of opinion, that for this very *Tranſgreſſion* he was at length cut off.

But leaſt *Saul's* wickedneſs ſhould be thought to have obſtructed the proceeding; and that ſome may thereupon be induced to think it may prove otherwiſe, where God gives the opportunity of doing it; I ſay, notwithſtanding ſuch Evaſions, common Experience ſhews the contrary.

And altho' we read of our *Bleſſed Savi-*

ours raiſing *Lazarous, after he had been dead four Days,* yet the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* were ſo far from being affected with it, ſo far either from believing in *Chriſt,* or obeying his Commands, that they conſulted how to *put him to Death.*

Thus alſo when *Herod* had beheaded St. *John the Baptiſt,* and came to hear of the fame of *Jeſus,* he preſently concludes with himſelf that St. *John Baptiſt* was riſen from the *Dead*; which altho' it was falſe, yet *Herod* believed it was true; and altho' he was perſuaded that St. *John* was riſen, and that God had ſignally atteſted the Horrid Wickedneſs of the One, and the Real Innocency of the Other, yet notwithſtanding all this, *Herod* continued in thoſe very Sins which St. *John the Baptiſt* reprov'd him for before. *Nay, our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf dyed and roſe again,* and yet the *Chief Prieſts* and *Elders* of the *Jews* (inſtead of being wrought upon thereby) endeavoured by the moſt ſubtile Devices to aboliſh the very Memory and Report of his Reſurrection.

Thus

Thus you ſee how ineffectual extraordinary Means are, when Men have hardned themſelves againſt all Impreſſions from *Divine Revelation*; and I dare make this Challenge to any Man, whoſe Reading or Obſervation can inform him, of any that have been made true Converts by *Apparitions* from the *Dead.*

I know the *Popiſh Legends* and other Writings of that kind, mention very ſtrange Effects produced in the Living by *Apparitions* from the *Dead*; but the Vanity and Impoſture of ſuch Reports is ſo Notorious, that it would give them ſome kind of Credit to attempt a ſett and induſtrious Refutation of them; and therefore I ſhall haſten to the laſt thing propoſed, and that is to ſhew the inconſiſtency of the Suppoſition with Reaſon.

3*dly*, To grant there may be ſuch a thing as the *Apparition of a Deceaſed Perſon*, yet no Man (I preſume) will deny but it is God's Prerogative and peculiar

Priviledge to *Faſhion and Compoſe* a Man; and every Man from the firſt Creation till the Diſſolution of all things, is the undeniable Work of his Hand: *For it is he that has made us and not we our ſelves, his Eyes beheld our Subſtance when imperfect, and in his Book (and his alone) are all our Members written.*

Now if to Create, is God's peculiar *Priviledge*? If nothing of an Inferior Being can pretend to it? If Death makes a real *Diviſion* and *Separation* both of *Soul* and *Body*, by the *ſpecial Appointment* and *Deſignation* of God himſelf, and ſuch a *Diſſolution* that the *Body* returns to *Duſt*, *Corruption* and *Putrefaction*, and the *Soul* is taken into the ſafe *Cuſtody* of *Angels*, who are to anſwer for it and Conduct it to that *State*, either of *Happineſs*, or *Miſery*, where it is to remain till the *Reſurrection*; yet there can be no reaſon to think (ſuppoſing there may be an *Apparition*) that this *Apparition* ſhould conſiſt of the *ſame* Body and Soul which did belong to the *Deceaſed Perſon*; becauſe it

it is Gods Prerogative only, to *Create and Unite* the Body and Soul of Man; and the ſame Body and Soul being once diſſolv'd and ſeparated by Death, are *confined* by the Wiſe Order and Appointment *of God to their reſpective States* untill *the laſt Trumpet ſound, and Command them to riſe again*; and therefore as it cannot be with the *ſame* Body and Soul, it is altogether as unlikely it ſhould be with the Body or Soul of any *other* Deceaſed Perſon whatever, for the ſame reaſon of *Confinement* already given.

And therefore to ſuppoſe there may be an *Apparition*, yet of what can we imagine it ſhould conſiſt? It muſt either conſiſt of *Subſtance* or *Matter*, or elſe it muſt be *Immaterial* and without *Subſtance*: If it conſiſts of *Subſtance* and *Matter*, and conſequently may be Seen, Felt, and Underſtood, why may it not be *ſecured* and *kept* for the Conviction of ſuch as will not believe there are ſuch Beings; but this was never yet attempted, and therefore I dare conclude,

conclude, that either there can be no ſuch thing at all, or if there be, it muſt be *Incorporeal* or *Immaterial.*

And to ſuppoſe this: How is it likely it ſhould perform the *ſame* operations with *Matereal* and *Corporeal* Beings (as is frequently pretended either by *diſcourſing with, diſcovering* things paſt, or *foretelling* things that are to come.)

Or, to ſuppoſe a Point further; that it is neither meerly *Corporeal*, nor yet meerly *Incorporeal.* But (as ſome Philoſophers Imagined) a Being or Exiſtence between both; yet if ſo, how is it likely it ſhould ſo nearly reſemble ſuch a Being, as was both *Material* and *Immaterial*, and as ſuch conſiſted both of *Soul* and *Body*; for if it be *Incorporeal*, it muſt neceſſarily be *Immaterial*, and if it is *Immaterial*, it muſt as neceſſarily be *Inviſible*, and if ſo, the Controverſie is at an end.

But

But to beg your Patience a while longer; according to the Platonick Hypotheſis, *Spirits are Embodied*; and altho' a very ingenious Perſon ſeems to think that *Spirits* can aſſume to themſelves Bodies of *different* Figure and Conformation of Parts; yet the ſame Perſon as ingeniouſly confeſſes, 'tis but a meer Conjecture, owns that he can give no manner of Reaſon for it, but common Report; and is ſo far from impoſing it upon the World, that he calls it his own extravagant Opinion.

Mr. Locks *Humane Underſtanding* page 162. Book 2d. Chap. 23.

Hiſtorians I am ſenſible make frequent mention of the *Miracles of Magicians*, and ſeveral other Unaccountable Prodigies by Inviſible Powers *and wicked Spirits*; thus they tell us, that not only *the time*, *but the place of* Ceſars *Death* was fortold to *Pompey* and *Craſſus*; but as this happen'd in a little time after, ſo it was as much expected as it was foretold, as *Tully* witneſſes, *lib. 2. de Divinatione.*

And

And altho' ſome of their Predictions might happen to be true, yet this muſt be ſuppos'd in Common Reaſon, to happen but by Chance, becauſe they ſo often failed; which can be owing to nothing *more then the over-ruling Power and Providence of God who bringeth the Councels of the Heathens to naught, and maketh their Devices to be of none effect.* thus *Demoſthenes confeſſed that the Delphian Oracle* was determined by *Philip* of *Macedon*, and their Corruption is clearly taken notice of in ſeveral other Authors.

Euſebius *Prepar. lib.* 4. ſhews that ſeveral of the Heathen Prieſts publickly confeſſed the Impoſtures of their *Oracles*, and that their Confeſſions have been, if they are not ſtill upon Record; and as the World increaſed in Knowledge, they were rejected and laid aſide: For as ſoon as Light and Immortality became diſcovered by the Power of the Goſpel, they were viſibly ſlighted and diſregarded till at length they became deſpicable every day more and more.

I make no doubt but there have been *Apparitions*, as in the ſeveral forementioned Inſtances from Scripture for Ends and Deſigns beſt known to God, as perhaps for the Manifeſtation of his Power and Wiſdom, of his Love and Goodneſs to Mankind; but I cannot ſee the leaſt reaſon why or how, there ſhould or can be any ſuch in theſe times; Since *Miracles are Ceaſed, Gods ways are ſufficiently known upon the Earth, and his ſaving Health amongſt all Nations.*

For as God cannot propoſe any thing conſiderable to Mankind, (as to the Revelation of his Will and Pleaſure here, or his Rewards and Puniſhments in the other Life) either by raiſing the *Dead*, or ſuffering or permitting an *Apparition*, (as has been already ſhewn) ſo neither can I think, that any other Being has Power to do it. for altho' the *Devil* had a Power once given *him to Metamorphoſe and take ſtrange ſhapes upon* him, (*as he did to* Eve *in the ſhape of a Serpent*) yet it does not follow

 that

that he has the ſame Power to do ſo ſtill; and altho' God might permit and ſuffer it in thoſe times, and likewiſe *Eve* to be tempted by him, (perhaps to bring about that profound Myſtery of his Love, the Incarnation and Crucifixion of our Bleſſed Saviour,) yet ſince the Coming of our *Saviour* into the World, (according to that Prediction of him) *the Seed of the Woman has bruiſed the Serpents Head*, the Power *of Satan is deſtroyed, and his Kingdom is at an End, and thanks be to God who has given us the Victory through our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.*

God has engaged himſelf by a ſolemn Promiſe to us, in the firſt Epiſtle to the Corinthians, chap. 10. *that no temptation ſhall befall us, but ſuch as is common to Man, and more over that he will not ſuffer us to be tempted above that we are able.*

Now, if this be ſo, it cannot be in the Power of *Satan* or any of his *Agents* to make any extraordinary Aſſaults upon us without

without our own Concurrence; and altho' ſome Perſons do pretend to Præternatural and Extraordinary Temptations; I dare be poſſitive this is more owing to their *own* Wickedneſs, and Debaucheries, then to any thing elſe beſides.

For, when Men have once thrown aſide Religion, turned God himſelf out of their thoughts, and make no ſcruple to commit Evil, 'tis no wonder God ſhould have done with them, that he ſhould leave them to a Reprobate Mind, till at length they believe a Lye. But then on the other hand *whilſt Men are careful to order their* Converſation *as becomes the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt*, the *Devil* can have no Power over them. But if this be the leaſt of all their thoughts, they grow reſtleſs and uneaſie, ſubject to the groſeſt Superſtitions, wild and unſettled in their Heads, till at length they fall into downright Atheiſm.

I plainly ſee two Objections that will be offered againſt what I have here ſaid,

which I think it needfull to Anſwer, before I conclude.

1*ſt.* Some will ſay 'tis a piece of very ill breeding to diſprove what has been Aſſerted and Atteſted by very many Perſons of good Integrity and Senſe.

2*dly*, Others again will ſay that I have gratified the Devil in one main Point of his Controverſie with us, whoſe Policy it is to Propagate the Unbelief of *Apparitions*, whoſe Conceſſion Infers his Exiſtence; and if no *Apparitions*, then no *Devil*.

To the Firſt I Anſwer, that multiplicity of Opinions cannot Defend and Secure us from being impos'd upon. For to ſuppoſe any thing true, only becauſe a Multitude does Atteſt it, is to ſuppoſe Whoring or Defrauding juſtifiable, becauſe ſo many in theſe times delight in the One, and practice the Other.

As

As it was in the Days of Old, ſo many will not be perſuaded to believe ſuch things as may be any ways diſagreeable to their firſt Notions and Apprehenſions of things. But certainly this can be no Argument of Truth, for altho' many have hitherto been impoſed upon, yet it does not follow but that many more may be ſo again.

How many were deluded by the Prieſts of *Baal* into the Belief of Southſaying, and many other ſuperſtitious Idolatries? How groſly were the *Romans* impos'd upon by *Junius Proculus* one of the Chief of their Nobility? who, (Notwithſtanding *Romulus* had been torn in pieces in the Senate Houſe,) ſwore that he was taken up among the Gods, and that he had appeared particularly to him, and commanded him to tell the People that it was the pleaſure of the Immortal Gods to have him continue among Mankind, till he had founded a City whoſe Empire and Glory ſhould far ſurpaſs all others; and that he would always be a Propitious God to them, under the Name of *Quirinus*.

Name

And thus likewiſe in ſome Chriſtian Churches (if all be true that is reported) there are very ſtrange deceptions, ſome whereof are ſtill confeſſed by the Name of Pious Fraud.

Theudas an Impoſtor led away four Thouſand Perſons in the Wilderneſs, and the Deluſions of *Mahomet* almoſt the fourth part of Mankind; all *Hereſies* how groſs ſoever, have found a Welcome with the People.

Thus many of the *Jews* were wrought into a Belief that *Herod* was the *Meſſias*; and how many in theſe times of the more *inferior ſort of People*, are openly and daily deluded by *Fortune-tellers*, *Juglers*, and *other incantatory Impoſtors*; unto whom (which is very deplorable in Chriſtians) too many apply themſelves between Jeſt and Earneſt, till at length they are prevailed with to quit the Truth, and being once deceived themſelves, they muſt needs be ſubject to very great Miſtakes and Errors.

But

But beſides all this, there are others who (who out of a ſupine careleſsneſs and neglect of Enquiry even of ſuch Matters whereof they doubt themſelves) are yet willing to believe many things rather then be at the trouble and difficulty of Examining them; and either from an Unactive Temper of Mind to put in Execution the Dictates and Suggeſtions of their own Reaſon, or elſe by a ſtrange Kind of contentment and acquieſceny in every Species of Truth, they readily embrace the leaſt Shadow thereof.

But certainly had our Fore-Fathers ſate down and taken up ſuch Reſolutions, the Face of Truth had been abundantly more obſcur'd then now it is.

2*dly*, To the other Objection it may be Anſwered that I have not any where deny'd the Being of *Spirits*; and how ſtrange ſoever it may ſeem to ſome, that I cannot believe there are *Apparitions*, yet I deſire ſuch Perſons to conſider, how deſtructive

ſtructive the Belief of them has been for ſeveral Ages to the Chriſtian Religion.

For upon what elſe but ſuch pretended *Apparitions* and *Revelations* do the *Papiſts* ground their *Purgatory and Prayers for the Dead*; and very much of the ſame ſtrain are thoſe pretended *Infuſions of New Lights and Enthuſiaſtick Inſpirations from another ſort of People.*

Now, ſince *Almighty God* has been pleas'd to Reveal every thing needful to be known by us, in the *Holy Scriptures*, both as to our chief Intereſt, and Duty in this preſent World; it rather concerns us to ſhew ourſelves truly thankful for, and humbly to acquieſce in ſo gratious a *Revelation*, than to raiſe any farther Scruples or Doubts concerning any *one* thing that is contain'd in it.

And if Men could but once be prevailed upon for to Act thus, we ſhould be

be

be abundantly convinc'd of the Truth and Certainty of *a Future State* and *the Rewards and Puniſhments* of another Life, without moleſting or diſturbing the *Dead*, to make proof of it.

Has not the Prophet *Daniel* above two Thouſand Years ago? *Chap. 7. 9.* diſcovered as much to us by what the *Almighty was pleas'd to ſhew him in a Viſion, when his Throne was like a fiery Flame, when Thouſands Thouſands miniſtred unto him, aud ten Thouſand times ten Thouſand ſtood before him, when the Judgment was ſet, and the Books were opened.*

And has not the ſame *Prophet* told us farther? Chap. 12. 2. *that they who ſleep in the Daſt of the Earth, ſhall riſe ſome to everlaſting Life, and ſome to Everlaſting Shame and Contempt.*

And how often are we told in the *New Teſtament? That God will render unto every One according to his Works.*

Has not St. *Paul* deſcended farther, ſpecified the very time, and given all Imaginable ſatisfaction and poſitive *Aſſurance* that the Heart of Man can reaſonably deſire, as to the Caſe before us? When he tells us, *God has appointed a Day in which he will Judge the World in Righteouſneſs, by that Man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all Men, in that he hath raiſed him from the Dead.*

I might lay before you, many other places of *Scripture* to the ſame purpoſe, which I muſt needs omit, leaſt I ſhould exceed the narrow Proportion of a Letter; whoever has a mind to ſee theſe at large, may have full ſatisfaction, from the learned Dr. *Scot*, in his *Chriſtian Life*, and Dr. *Sherlock* in his Treatiſe of a *Future Jndgment.*

And altho' our chief Evidence for Proof of a *Future State*, does depend on *Scripture*, yet thoſe Perſons who will queſtion the

the *Scriptures* in a point of ſo great *Moment*, will queſtion any thing,

That *Almighty God* in a thing of ſo great Importance, has not left himſelf without witneſs to all the World, will appear upon theſe two accounts.

Firſt, *By conſidering the Nature of God.*

Secondly, *By conſidering the Nature of Man*

Firſt, By conſidering the Nature of *God* himſelf, who is an Omnipotent, Powerful, and Wiſe Being, which appears by the bare Work of his Creation: He regards not the Actions of his People (*whom he hath made*) ſo as to have only a Naked ſpeculative Knowledg of them, but with an Eye of *Providence and Judgment*; he does not meerly gaze upon us, as an indifferent and unconcerned Spectator, but beholds and views us with the higheſt concernment; either with Infinite Complacency, or Deteſtation.

And what can we imagine all this ſhould be for? But in order to be produced either for or againſt us, whenſoever he ſhall be pleas'd to call us to an Account, that ſo he may diſtribute his Rewards or Puniſhments accordingly; this *Solomon* clearly Determines, *Eccleſ.* 12. 14. *he will bring every Work into Judgment, with every ſecret thing.* And if there are any, who will not be perſuaded as to the truth of this, only becauſe God has ſpoken it, *who is not a Man, that he ſhould lye, nor the Son of Man, that he ſhould Repent*; there will be a time when with *Shame and Confuſion of face they ſhall be forced to confeſs, Righteous art thou O Lord, and true are all thy Judgments.*

Almighty God is not only a Powerful and Omnipotent Being, but Truth and Juſtice are Attributes as Eſſential to him as any other; and if God be Juſt, he muſt needs do Juſtice to every Perſon, for *ſhall not the Judge of all the World do right?* And if he does not diſtribute this Juſtice for the

the preſent, it unavoidably follows that it muſt be done hereafter, and that the diſpenſations of his Providence, are in many things promiſcuous and *uncertain* now, is an invincible Argument of the Great *Certainty* of a *Future State.*

2*dly*, This Truth will apear farther, by conſidering the *Nature of Man.*

The very Nature and Condition of *Man*, ſhews him to be a Creature that muſt give an Account of himſelf hereafter; this the *Scriptures* are poſitive in, and therefore St. *Paul* tells us, *Rom.* 14. 12. *Every one muſt give an Account of himſelf to God.*

But beſides the *Scripture*, Reaſon will make out as much, for as Man was Created in time, his Creation muſt needs argue ſome Deſign in the Creator, and as Man was endued with Reaſon; it is but rational to think, that he ſhould be alſo Accountable to his Creator, how far he has

has answered the Design of his Creation, either here, or hereafter; this has been Universally consented too by Mankind.

That Almighty God does not permit and suffer his Servants upon their departure out of this *World*, either to lye sleeping in the *Dust*, or to be hovering about unrewarded to the End of it: But as soon as they have finished their Work upon Earth; he either admits them to the Joy of their Master, *i. e.* to all the Felicities, that their separated *Spirits* are capable of, in those several Degrees and Measures of *Perfection* which they have arrived to: Or else dismisses them into a State of Misery and Horror, where they are to remain during their separation from the Body, expecting the farther Completion of their Happiness or Misery by a General *Resurrection*; is sufficiently attested by the *Primitive Sages* of the *Church*, as *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Clemens*, St. *Chrysostome*, and many others; plainly Intimating that the Souls of the Righteous after Death, are kept

kept in a proper Receptcles, enjoying certain Degrees either of Happineſs, or Miſery, till the Day of the *Reſurrection.* This is called in *Scripture* ſometimes by the *Name of Paradiſe*, ſometimes by the *Name of* Abraham's *Boſome.*

And the Souls of the Righteous are expreſly ſaid to be *ſuſtinentes Reſurrectionem, eternitatis candidati*, i. e. waiting with a ſolicitous expectation for the Reſurrection, and to ſtand Candidates for *Immortality.*

And that there is nothing in all this, but what is agreable to *Scripture*, is evident from *Zachariah*, chap. 9. 10, 11. where the Souls of the Righteous, are ſtyled *Priſoners of hope, lying in the Lake where there is no Water*, i. e. (as ſome interpret) no conſtant Stream of *Joy*; but yet they are ſupported with certain Showers, and farther Illuminations of their Hope.

And

And that the Souls of the Wicked are confined to a State of Misery, St. *Jude* plainly intimates when he tells us, *verse* 13. *that they are reserved unto the Blackness of Darkness*

When St. *Paul* reasoned with *Felix*, of a Judgment to come, it made him tremble; and that the Common Heathens themselves were convinc'd of as much, appears from their Notions (which are still upon Record) of *Minos*, *Eacus*, & *Rhadamanthus*: And with what Artificial and plausible pretences soever, Men may seem and endeavour to Colour over their Debaucheries, yet 'tis not in their Power to drown or stifle the Clamours of their Consciences, which will suggest what they must expect hereafter.

Let us then resolve with a Holy Sobriety and Religious Prudence, (instead of questioning) to confine our hopes and desires only to be directed by the written *Word of God*; which is every way fitted and

and proportioned for the regulating our Lives, in order to that Great End *of making us wiſe unto Salvation*, and if we have ſuch a certain Rule, propos'd to us, will it not argue the moſt monſtrous Vanity, and unaccountable Perverſneſs, to depart from it.

And if Men will not believe that there is a *God*, and a *Future State* of Rewards and Puniſhments, without an *Apparition* or ſome New *Revelation*, they are *never* like to have it.

For God has no where undertaken to gratifie the vain deſires and peeviſh Inclinations of his People; he has ſufficiently provided for their Welfare and Happineſs, both by Nature and *Revelation*; and it is not from any thing but the want of a modeſt and humble Submiſſion thereunto, that ſo many grow wild and unſettled in their Heads, that they are always gadding after *New Diſcoveries* and *Revelations*; and for all thoſe that will not be ſaved, un-

leſs it be according to their own Way and Method of Invention, how Inſulting or Atheiſtically ſoever they may carry it for the preſent, yet there will be a *time when they ſhall be forced to lye down in their own Shame, and to cover themſelves with their own Confuſion.*

F I N I S.

ADVERTISEMENT.

A Sermon Preach'd at the Funeral of Mrs. *Bullivant*, Who was Barbarously Murder'd by *Edmund Eudley*. By *B. Crooke*, A. M. Rector of St. *Michael Woodstreet*.